



Spring 2022



Common Merganser | Putnam County's Docksides Park | Steve Rappaport



SMRA sanctuary worker Danny Ferguson and board member Earl DePass installing our new FeederCam at Pruyin with camera and software installation by board member Steve Rappaport. To view, visit [www.youtube.com/sawmillriveraudubon](http://www.youtube.com/sawmillriveraudubon)



Our "Joy of Birds" photography exhibit at the Hendrick Hudson Free Library featuring local photographers drew a good crowd for our opening reception in February.



One of our most popular Bird Chats to date was our Zoom visit with local Falconer Chris Zummalt with her Red-tailed Hawk Thunder live on camera. Visit our YouTube channel to watch this episode.

## Spring Public Programs

This spring, we are offering our free public programs online via Zoom. For more program details and to register for Zoom links and reminders, visit [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs)

Spring bird walks are listed on page 3 with details and registration at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips)



Thursday, March 10, 7:00 pm via Zoom  
**A Tale of Many Penguins: Ardith Bondi**

This presentation will show and discuss the different species of penguins and how they live. Ardith Bondi will share some of her experiences photographing penguins in the wild, as well as efforts being made to conserve penguins.



Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 pm via Zoom  
**Why Make Music with Birds: David Rothenberg**

David Rothenberg spends a lot of time making music live with birds. From nightingales to lyrebirds, laughing thrushes to catbirds, he believes music can be used to help us communicate across species lines and create forms of art no one kind of animal could make alone. In this online talk, he shows you how it's done. Organized by Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon and co-sponsored by Saw Mill River Audubon and other Westchester Audubon chapters. Register for this program at <https://www.brssaudubon.org>



Thursday, April 28, 7:00 pm via Zoom  
**Recycling? Is It Working? Is It Worth Doing?**

Join us for a Zoom conversation with some regional recycling gurus to consider the rumors, the myths and more about what happens to that stuff we put in the blue bins. Is recycling worth it anymore?

See more spring public programs on page 3 and at <https://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs>

To view this newsletter as a PDF in color and with clickable links, visit <https://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/news>

## President's Message

As I write this, it's still chilly winter, but the recent program on bird migration sponsored by the five Westchester Audubon chapters turned my thoughts to spring. Benjamin Van Doren, a Ph.D. who began birding as a teen with our local chapters, explained how migratory birds respond to changing environments, including light pollution, feeding opportunities, and warming temperatures. You can view a recording of this and many of our other programs on SMRA's YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/sawmillriveraudubon](http://www.youtube.com/sawmillriveraudubon).

One focus of Ben's talk was the effect of artificial light at night (ALAN) on bird migration. The annual 9/11 Tribute in Light is a case in point. Researchers found that the light beams extending 2,400 meters into the sky attracted and then confused and trapped migrating birds, many of whom collided with the buildings or became exhausted and crashed to the ground. A nearby radar station is now used to monitor the number of birds flying within the beams during the memorial. When too many birds are caught in the lights, they are turned off for 20 minutes so that the trapped birds will move on.

Artificial light at night is not just a problem with high-rise buildings. Analyzing 20 years of records from a low-rise convention center in Chicago, Ben and his collaborators found that the number of bird collisions there was tightly correlated with the building's total lighted window area and that collisions with specific windows were dramatically reduced when the lights were turned off or the shades drawn.

Ben also discussed a new tool that can forecast bird migration patterns at the local level, allowing for migration alerts to warn people when it's most important to turn out non-essential lights. This tool, BirdCast.info, operated by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Oregon State University, uses radar data originally developed for weather forecasting to identify bird migrations in real time. BirdCast will be live beginning March 15 at [www.birdcast.info](http://www.birdcast.info).



Valerie Lyle, SMRA President

All of this got me thinking about the larger impacts of light pollution. I'm lucky to live on a block without streetlights, where we can still hear Great Horned and Screech Owls, spring peepers and tree frogs, and the full chorus of summer insects in our trees at night. However, I have noticed a decline in the number of fireflies and exotic moths as more of us use outdoor lights late into the evening. Not only does artificial light affect bird migration and the breeding behavior of diurnal birds, it also decreases the availability of those insects and larvae that songbirds depend on to nourish their young.

Turning off outdoor lighting during bird migration is critical. However, many suggest taking steps to reduce the use of unnecessary outdoor lighting year-round because the effects of ALAN extend to so much of the web of life. Security lights around our homes and businesses should be limited to areas where they are truly necessary and activated by motion sensors. Decorative and task lights on patios and decks should not be left on all night, be directed downward, and have a minimal level of brightness. Windows should be covered when lights in a room or office are on at night.

We should also work to convince our employers and businesses in our towns to reduce artificial light at night and should support lights-out legislation where we live. New York City became one of the most recent cities to adopt such legislation in December for all city-owned or -occupied buildings. In January, legislation was introduced in Albany that would limit outdoor lighting statewide during migration. These laws and our individual and collective actions will help keep birds safe and help restore the darker nighttime skies that all organisms appear to need.

Valerie Lyle



Please help make sure Saw Mill River Audubon is here for future generations by remembering us in your will.

### Saw Mill River Audubon

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## Spring 2022 Schedule

### Special Spring Events

**Second Saturday Walks, Brinton Brook Sanctuary 3/12, 4/9, 5/14, 6/11.** Meet at 9:00 am in the main lot. Walk typically lasts two hours. Rain or snow does not cancel but, if road conditions are difficult, check our website calendar before traveling. For adults and youth 8 and up. No registration required.

**Project Feeder Watch: March Saturdays and Sundays from 9:00 to 11:00 am,** at the Croton Point Park office's bird feeders to watch, ID and count birds. No registration. Bring a chair. Check our website calendar before traveling in case of any schedule changes.

**Bird Chat, 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 7:00 pm.** A Zoom gathering of birders and bird photographers to review recent sightings and regional birding hotspots with conversation guests from the New York birding community. Beginners welcome! Past Chat guest videos are on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/sawmillriveraudubon>. Register for Zoom link and email reminders: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/chat](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/chat)

**Nature Book Club: Tue 3/1, 7:00 pm.** Every other month, join us on Zoom to listen and watch or to join in a discussion about intriguing nature books. In March, we will be discussing *A Most Remarkable Creature: The Hidden Life of the World's Smartest Birds of Prey* by Jonathan Meiburg. Get zoom link and reminders at: <https://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/book-club/>

**Birding Tea! Saturday, May 21, 3:00 pm to 5:30 pm**  
Suggested donation of \$20/person.  
See details on page 4 and also at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/tea](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/tea).

### Zoom Public Programs

Get more details and register for Zoom links and reminders at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-programs)

**Thursday, March 10, 7:00 pm**

A Tale of Many Penguins: Ardith Bondi

**Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 pm**

Why Make Music with Birds: David Rothenberg

**Thursday, April 28, 7:00 pm**

Recycling? Is It Worth It?

**Wednesday, May 25, 7:00 pm**

Hudson Valley Wading Birds: Alan Wells

**Wednesday, June 22, 7:00 pm**

Learn about eastern coyotes with The Wolf Center



### Birding Field Trips

*Details & registration online at:*  
[www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips)

**Trips marked OPEN do not require registration**

#### MARCH — WALKS START 8:00 am

Saturday, March 5, Croton Point Park

Monday, March 7, Muscoot Farm

Friday, March 11, Croton Point Park (OPEN)

Sunday, March 13, Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Monday, March 21, Croton Point Park

Wednesday, March 23, Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Monday, March 28, Marshlands Conservancy

#### APRIL — WALKS START 8:00 am

Saturday, April 2, Croton Point Park

Monday, April 4, Muscoot Farm

Friday, April 8, Croton Point Park (OPEN)

Sunday, April 10, Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Monday, April 18, Croton Point Park

Monday, April 25, Marshlands Conservancy

Wednesday, April 27, Rockefeller State Park Preserve



#### MAY — WALKS START 7:00 am

Monday, May 2, Muscoot Farm

Saturday, May 7, Croton Point Park

Sunday, May 8, Rockefeller State Park Preserve

Monday, May 16, Croton Point Park

Wednesday, May 23, Marshlands Conservancy

Wednesday, May 25, Rockefeller State Park Preserve



#### JUNE — WALKS START 7:00 am

Saturday, June 4, Croton Point Park

Sunday, June 5, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Monday, June 6, Muscoot Farm

Wednesday, June 22, Rockefeller SP Preserve

Monday, June 27, Croton Point Park

Wednesday, June 30, Marshlands Conservancy



#### DAWN CHORUS WALKS — START 6:00 am

*Earlier walks to catch the spring dawn chorus. No registration is required. Details: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/register-trips)*

Wednesday, May 4, 6:00 am, Rockefeller SPP (OPEN)

Monday, May 9, 6:00 am, Croton Point Park (OPEN)

Thursday, May 12, 6:00 am, Marshlands (OPEN)

Thursday, May 19, 6:00 am, Pruyin Sanctuary (OPEN)

Tuesday, May 24, 6:00 am, Brinton Brook (OPEN)

Friday, June 24, 6:00 am, Pruyin Sanctuary (OPEN)

Thursday, June 30, 6:00 am, Brinton Brook (OPEN)



## Help Save Birds from Window Collisions

Spring migration is here and with it an increased likelihood of bird–building collisions. In the U.S., hundreds of millions of birds die each year from a collision with glass. And though glass skyscrapers notoriously account for perhaps half of the death toll, homes and other low-rise buildings pose equal danger.

**Birds collide with glass because they are unable to perceive reflective and clear glass as an obstacle.**

Even small windows can be dangerous, as birds routinely fly through small spaces, such as between leaves. Most bird–glass collisions happen during the day, which is why windows that reflect greenery, presenting an inviting image of nature, can be dangerous. Another common danger for birds is bird feeders placed at a medium distance from a window. Their placement at distances between three and 10 feet away gives birds enough distance to build up enough speed to injure themselves in a collision but too little distance to avoid the window.

Many strategies are available for homeowners to prevent

bird collisions, including various tapes and decals that still permit a view out, as summarized in this flier from the American Bird Conservancy: <https://abcbirds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Save-birds-2017.pdf>

**Bird lovers can also help out by reporting bird–window collisions to [dbird.org](http://dbird.org),** a coalition between the NYC and Seattle Audubon chapters that now logs such events from around the country.

As part of a challenge by New York State Audubon, the Saw Mill River Audubon Advocacy Committee is interested in identifying a building in our chapter territory which has a high bird collision and mortality rate and working with its owner to make it a “bird-safe” building. We welcome suggestions of possible building candidates by our chapter members.

**If you know of a building that desperately needs bird-proofing, contact us at our office.** (See page 2 for our contact info.)

*Jennifer Stern*



### What About that Bird Fluttering at Your Window?

Another interaction between birds and windows happens during the breeding season when birds see

their reflection in your window. Birds may think that reflection is different bird of their species trespassing on their territory, a rival to chase away. What to do? Massachusetts Audubon has several good tips on this issue and other bird–window issues here: <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/nature-wildlife/birds/birds-attacking-windows>

**Birding Tea!**  
 Saturday, May 21  
 3:00 to 5:30 pm  
 Hosted by Cary Andrews  
 Croton-on-Hudson  
 RSVP & Space limited  
 Benefits Saw Mill River Audubon | \$20 person donation

## Our Birding Tea Returns!

All are invited on Saturday, May 21, 3:00 to 5:30 pm, to a proper high tea with lovely homemade goodies and tea at Cary Andrews’ house in Croton-on-Hudson. This is an informal gathering to meet other Audubon friends and to talk about creating backyard habitat, bird-friendly gardens, and other ways we can help our fine-feathered friends. RSVP is required and space will be limited. To RSVP, call 914-271-4138 or email [oomis@aol.com](mailto:oomis@aol.com). Our Birding Tea is a benefit for Saw Mill River Audubon with a suggested donation \$20/person

## All About the Nature Book Club

Lately, I have had a few people ask: “What’s this Nature Book Club all about anyway?”

In a nutshell, it’s a group that meets once every two months to discuss a book about nature. So far, the books have all been nonfiction, although that could change. Some are very science oriented, some more historical, and others have more of a lyrical bent. Often they are a blend of all three. And they’ve all been chosen because they are a really good read. We’ve read books about snails, about ice, and about Alexander von Humboldt. (Don’t know who he is? Read *The Invention of Nature* by Andrea Wulf). Oh, and of course, we often read about birds.

We have some regulars, but it’s not a cliquy group. Some people drift in and out. There’s no commitment.

Come and participate, or come and just listen.

Even if you haven’t been able to read the book, you will enjoy the discussion.

We normally have about 15 people in attendance. Usually there are many copies of the books available through the Westchester Library system. And lately it’s all on Zoom.

You can get the Zoom link at: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/book-club](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/book-club).

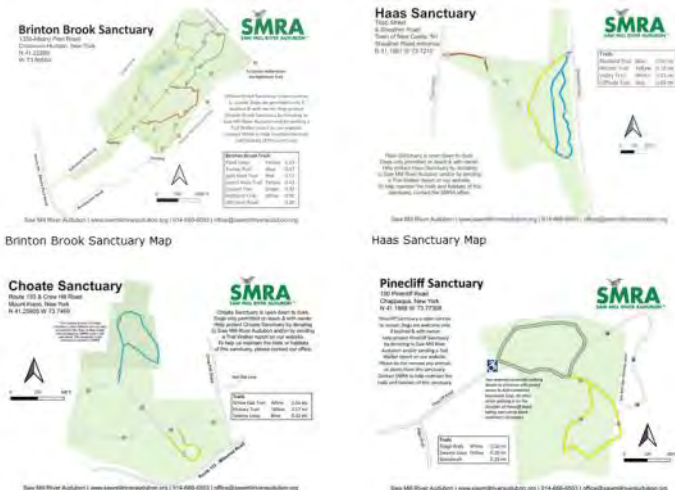
Our next book is about the Striated Caracara, but *A Most Remarkable Creature* by Indie rock musician Jonathan Meiburg, is actually about so much more. A review in *Audubon* called it “part travelogue, part natural history, and fully an ode to these resilient birds.” We’re be discussing this book on Tuesday, March 1, at 7:00 pm. I hope to see you there!

*Kathleen Williamson*

## SMRA Sanctuary News

We are very glad for the help of our volunteer Trail Walkers to monitor our sanctuaries. This is especially important after storm events so that we know right away if any trails are blocked by fallen trees. We welcome your trail reports too at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/walker](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/walker)

- ◆ This spring, we plan to add a new wooden walkway on the Pond Loop Trail at Brinton Brook in an area that is now often wet due to more intense rain events.
- ◆ This spring, SMRA is also once again participating in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s “Buffer in a Bag” program planting new native trees and shrubs.
- ◆ **Want to help with the above sanctuary projects?** Visit [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/volunteer](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/volunteer) and we will let you know dates and times.



- ◆ **REMINDER that you can download all SMRA sanctuary trail maps**, including digital Avenza maps, at [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/maps](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/maps)



- ◆ **REMINDER that dogs should be leashed at all times in our sanctuaries.** Please help protect wildlife habitat by keeping your dog leashed and reminding other sanctuary visitors to do the same. This is in consideration of other sanctuary visitors and because unleashed dogs reduce habitat quality. Wildlife will avoid areas with unleashed dogs.

## 2022 Bird Quilt Raffle!

Our 2022 quilt is entitled “Birds at the Feeder.” This 47-inch by 63-inch lap quilt, pieced by Patricia Loquet and machine quilted by Missouri Star Quilt Company, has been made in a twist and turn pattern. Charming north-east birds, feeders and bird houses populate the quilt, and the quilting stitches are all plump little birds. Guaranteed to bring birding cheer all year around.



This quilt will be raffled off in support of the local conservation work of Saw Mill River Audubon. The winner will be announced at our 2022 Annual Dinner at Crabtree’s Kittle House, Chappaqua, now rescheduled for Friday, September 9, 2022.

To see close-up quilt views in color and to purchase raffle tickets, visit: [www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt](http://www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/quilt)

## Connect Kids to Parks Grants

It is easier than ever for classroom teachers in eligible schools to get full grant funding for a field trip to New York’s state parks.



A simple online application can provide grant funding for bus transportation and program fees for Saw Mill River Audubon-guided field trips to Rockefeller State Park Preserve.

We still have available dates for Spring 2022 field trips, and we can help your school apply for this grant. Send us a note today through our website to learn more.



## Looking Ahead...

### SMRA Returns to the Gaspé

We are planning an early June birding trip to the Gaspé Peninsula of Quebec to see boreal nesters and seabirds. Contact our office if you are interested to learn more.

### Friday, September 9, New Annual Dinner Date!

We shifted our scheduled annual dinner at Crabtree’s Kittle House to the fall. Save the new date!



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Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Prun Garden.  
Hummingbirds return in early May!  
Photo: Steve Rappaport

Connecting People and Nature Since 1953

## Explore Nature with Saw Mill River Audubon this Spring!

We have more than 50 events scheduled between March and June to connect you with local habitats, birds and other wildlife. Small-group bird walks. Online programs. Sanctuary walks.

**We connect people with nature!**



**This spring,  
don't be a birdnapper!**

This bird is a fledgling American Robin. It does not need to be rescued even though it cannot fly yet. Put it in bushes. Keep cats and dogs away. Let it stay wild. Learn more here: [sawmillriveraudubon.org/baby-birds](http://sawmillriveraudubon.org/baby-birds)

**Connecting with Nature:** Your gift helps us connect people and nature.

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**Please make checks payable to:** Saw Mill River Audubon and mail to our office address listed inside this newsletter.

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